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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Soil Conservation Service
Washington 25, D. C.

FIELD MEMORANDUM NO. 1124

Re: Awards

TO ALL RANKING FIELD OFFICERS:

The recognition of outstanding work on the part of any of our employees is an important part of the responsibilities of all supervisors in the Soil Conservation Service. Many opportunities and channels are provided in the Department's policy for recognizing and rewarding especially meritorious work. A number of separate committees have been established from time to time to assist supervisors in discharging their "award" responsibilities and passing on recommendations arising from both employees and supervisors.

These committees have done good work. However, with the addition of the most recent cash award program to the other methods of rewarding outstanding service, I believe the creation of a single committee to assist in the administration of the entire awards program of the Service to be highly desirable. I have therefore, consolidated the award functions now resting in various committees into a single Awards Committee in the Washington Office of the Service. It is charged with streamlining, improving, and stimulating the administration of the Soil Conservation Service Employee Award Program.

Regional Conservators are designating similar Regional Awards Committees to function within each region.

Organization of Committees

The Awards Committees in the Washington and Regional Offices shall be composed of not less than three nor more than seven members. The chairman shall be the Key Management Representative. The personnel officer shall be included among the members. The remaining memberships may be rotated from time to time if that seems desirable. An Executive Secretary to the Committee should be designated from among the members or as an additional non-voting staff assistant. Clerical and typing assistance needed in the Committee operations should be furnished by the Personnel Management Division.

Current membership of the Washington Awards Committee is given in the attachment to this memorandum.

Functions of the Washington Awards Committee:

Under the leadership of the Chief of the Service, the Awards Committee will activate and follow through the awards program of the Service, including, at present, the following types of recognition to employees:

1. Honor Awards (Distinguished and Superior Awards to Individuals or Units)

The Committee will receive and consider nominations for awards from Regional Conservators, from the Central Efficiency Rating Committee, from the Personnel Management Division, from supervisors, and from individual employees. The Committee may also originate nominations. Nominations approved by the Committee will be recommended to the Chief of the Service for consideration.

2. Pay Increases for Superior Accomplishment

The Committee will receive and consider recommendations referred to it by the central office Efficiency Rating Review Committee, by the Personnel Officer, and by individual supervisors for the Washington Office, Beltsville, nursery employees in the metropolitan area, and field research. The Committee will also consider approved employee suggestions referred to it by the Management Improvement Committee in Washington which may warrant meritorious pay increases.

All cases approved by the Awards Committee will be referred to the Employment Officer for final action.

(The awarding of Pay Increases for Superior Accomplishments to field people under regional jurisdiction has been delegated to the regions.)

3. Cash Awards for Meritorious Suggestions

The Committee will receive from the Management Improvement Committee in Washington all employee suggestions that have been adopted by the Committee. In addition, it will receive recommendations for cash awards from Regional Conservators, covering approved suggestions which originated under their jurisdiction.

The Committee will take care of the necessary clearance with the Soil Conservation Service Budget and Finance Division concerning availability of funds to cover each proposed award, as well as the clearance required with the Department Suggestion Award Committee.

4. Letters of Commendation, Certificates of Recognition, or Similar Awards

The Committee will on its own motion or, after considering recommendations made by efficiency rating committees, personnel officers, supervisors, or employees, recommend to Regional Conservators, the Chief of the Service, or the Secretary, letters of commendation (or other types of awards which may seem desirable) to employees for meritorious service or conduct. This particular function assigned to the Awards Committee should in no way be construed as a restriction on supervisors' general duty to recognize and commend on the spot unusually good or outstanding work on the part of their employees. On the contrary, supervisors throughout the Service are urged to be constantly on the alert to commend good work, verbally or in writing. Any such written commendation should be included in the employee's official personnel folder.

Functions of Regional Awards Committees

Under the leadership of the Regional Conservator, Regional Awards Committees will perform essentially the same functions indicated above within the area they serve. Final action on Pay Increases for Superior Accomplishment and Regional Letters of Commendation is, of course, taken in the Regional Office.

General Responsibilities of Washington and Regional Committees

1. Procedure and Criteria

The Washington Awards Committee is charged with the responsibility of formulating and putting into use simple, but effective, procedures and criteria for operation of the program within the framework of the general instructions pertaining to each type of award.

2. Stimulation of Interest in the program

All Awards Committees are charged with devising ways and means to stimulate continuing interest and active participation of all employees in the Service-wide awards program.

3. Cooperation

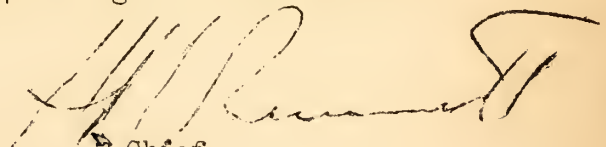
All awards committees shall cooperate very closely with

- a. The Budget and Finance Division with special reference to use of funds for cash awards;
- b. The Personnel Management Division in connection with its general responsibility for stimulating and assisting in employee programs; and
- c. The Management Improvement Committees in stimulating employees to submit worthwhile suggestions.

Cancellation of Previous Committee Designations

Assignment of special awards responsibilities to standing committees contained in the following memoranda are hereby cancelled:

1. Chief's memorandum of February 23, 1945 to Regional Conservators;
2. Acting Chief's memorandum of February 20, 1946 to Regional Conservators;
3. Chief's memorandum of March 4, 1947 to Regional Conservators.


Chief

Attachment

WASHINGTON AWARDS COMMITTEE

J. C. Dykes - Chairman

F. J. Hopkins - Alternate Chairman

Carl Brown

Verna C. Mohagen

Lloyd Signell

Roy D. Hockensmith

R. L. Geiger, Jr.

E. J. Peterson - Executive Secretary